

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Opportunity Center Inc

#### Delaware Manufacturing Extension Partnership

#### Opportunity Center, Inc. Achieves ISO Certification

##### Client Profile:

The Opportunity Center, Inc. (OCI) is a private 501(c)3 charitable, nonprofit organization that started in 1957 with the express purpose of assisting people with mental, physical and cognitive disabilities to reach their maximum vocational potential. An administration of 40 people works with about 70 disabled people employed at OCI or at a contracting employer's facility. Another 500 disabled people annually use OCI's accredited job training programs that last between two days and 20 weeks. The three main areas of employment include mailing fulfillment, document management and light assembly and packing. The facility, located in Wilmington, Delaware, has about \$5 million in annual sales and performs a function similar to programs offered by Goodwill. OCI employs 110 people.

##### Situation:

A major client of OCI, DuPont, was ISO certified and insisted that all subcontractors also be ISO certified. Also, many potential clients did not wish to consider OCI for contracting because they were not ISO-certified. Furthermore, OCI's three main divisions, mailing fulfillment, document management and light assembly and packing, were run by three managers who followed different sets of procedures. OCI had already performed fulfillment work for the Delaware Manufacturing Extension Partnership (DEMPEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, and turned to them to achieve ISO certification for all of OCI's programs.

##### Solution:

While OCI could have achieved ISO certification for just the sub-department that worked for DuPont, the OCI administration recognized the benefit of ISO certification to benefit the entire organization. OCI contracted with the DEMPEP, which brought in training, some provided as an in-kind donation to OCI's nonprofit mission, and also provided an ISO consultant to help OCI develop its quality manual and develop documentation to support it. Together, the DEMPEP and OCI reviewed each section of the ISO standard and described how jobs were to be done. Also included in the quality manual are a list of teams and a list of OCI executives. The DEMPEP consultant also conducted an audit of OCI before ISO did in order to address specific deficiencies in OCI's application. Contact between OCI and contracted businesses used to be handled by each OCI manager. Vendor contacts were not recorded, and if an employee left, knowledge of the contract left with that person. Now, every contact with a contract or potential contract is recorded into software expressly for that purpose.

ISO certification required OCI's three managers to write down procedures and record the results, none of which had ever been done prior to the DEMPEP's involvement. Writing down procedures meant that if an administrative employee left, managers could enter into another division and immediately know how to run that department. Also, breaking down tasks into component steps with visual representations of the work process greatly aided the employees with mental and cognitive disabilities, who need processes broken down into smaller steps. OCI is the only nonprofit in Delaware to be ISO certified and one of about two dozen in the Midatlantic United States.

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### Results:

- \* Achieved status as only nonprofit organization in Delaware to be ISO certified.
- \* Obtained three new contracts.
- \* Increased on-time delivery from 95 percent in 2003 to 97 percent in 2004, and year-to-date figures of 99 percent for 2005.
- \* Reduced corrective actions by 40 percent in 2003-2004; on target for a 25 percent drop in 2004-2005.
- \* Reduced rework by 53 percent in 2003-2004; on target for a 57 percent drop from 2004-2005.
- \* Created 43 visual cues, making day-to-day operations run more accurately and help prevent errors.

### Testimonial:

"The Delaware Manufacturing Extension Partnership's assistance has made us more organized, and achieving ISO certification has opened doors for us. Potential contractors take a second look at us now. Next, we are going to implement Lean Manufacturing."

Cathy Field Lloyd, President and CEO